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# F.B.I. Said to Have Sent Messages to Spy Suspect

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 12 — The Federal Bureau of Investigation sent coded messages more than a year ago to a man now described by prosecutors as a member of the Navy spy ring, proposing a meeting with him in Mexico, sources knowledgeable about the case said today.

Classified advertisements published in The Los Angeles Times last summer were addressed to "RUS." This is a code name that the bureau says was used by Jerry A. Whitworth, a retired Navy radioman charged with providing the Soviet Union with secret Navy documents.

Use of the advertisements, the sources said, had been recommended by RUS in a letter sent to the San Francisco F.B.I. office in which RUS offered to expose a "significant" spy ring. F.B.I. communications were placed in the "personal messages" column in the newspaper on Mondays last summer, the sources said.

## 'Absolutely No Evidence'

Mr. Whitworth has pleaded not guilty, and his lawyers have strenuously denied that he was "RUS" or was involved in what the Government says was a spy ring run by John A. Walker Jr., a retired Navy communications specialist who has been described as Mr. Whitworth's closest friend. Mr. Walker has also pleaded not guilty.

"There's absolutely no evidence to connect Jerry with RUS," said Jim Larson, one of the lawyers. "The Government's best efforts to try to establish a connection between the two failed, as best I know."

A Federal official said the F.B.I. had not found Mr. Whitworth's fingerprints on the typewritten letter, nor did the typeface of the letters match any typewriter or printer found in a search of his home in Davis, Calif., near Sacramento.

## 'Considering Your Offer'

The authorities said they were able to establish RUS's identity because of documents found in Mr. Walker's home.

According to the bureau, RUS, who listed his address as "Somewhere, U.S.A.," said in two letters to the bureau that he was willing to expose a 20-year-old spying operation in exchange for immunity from prosecution.

An advertisement on May 21, 1984, said: "RUS: Considering your offer. Call weekdays 9am — 11am. 415/628-2793." It was signed "ME, SF."

A man who answered a call to that number today spoke with a heavy Slavic accent and said his name was "Mr. John Smith." "This is not F.B.I.," he said. "If you wish to speak to F.B.I., call F.B.I. office." He would not identify himself further.

In an advertisement on Aug. 13, the sources said, the F.B.I. proposed the Mexican meeting. "RUS," it began. "Haven't heard from you, still want to meet. Propose meeting in Ensenada, Mexico, a neutral site. If you need travel funds, will furnish same at your choice of location in Silicon Valley or anywhere else."

This message followed an advertisement on June 11, 1984, in which the F.B.I. recommended a meeting on a San Francisco street corner, near the bureau's office, the sources said.

"RUS: Considering your dilemma," the advertisement said. "Need to speak with you to see what I can do. This can be done anonymously. Just you and I at 10AM June 21st at intersection of the street of my office & Hyde St. in my city."

## 'Newspaper in My Left Hand'

The 19-line message went on: "I'll carry a newspaper in my left hand. We will only discuss your situation to provide you with guidance as to where you stand. No action will be taken against you whatsoever at this meeting. Respond if you cannot make it or if you want to change locations I want to help you in your very trying situation but I need facts to be able to assist you."

The meetings in San Francisco and Mexico did not take place, according to a high-ranking law-enforcement official. "Nothing came of that," he said. "RUS decided it was a bad idea."

Mr. Walker's brother Arthur was convicted last week of espionage and faces life in prison. Michael L. Walker, John Walker's son, has also been charged in the case. He also has pleaded not guilty.

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the first of the letters from RUS arrived at its San Francisco office on May 11, 1984.

"In this letter," according to an affidavit signed by John H. Peterson, a

bureau agent, "RUS states that he has been involved in espionage for several years and that he has passed top secret cryptographic keylists for military communications and other intelligence information to his contact, who provided the information to agents of the U.S.S.R."

The letter, postmarked Sacramento, offered RUS's cooperation "in breaking up a 'significant espionage system' in return for 'complete immunity' and no disclosure of his identity," Mr. Peterson said.

The F.B.I. said it received a letter from RUS dated May 21, the day of the advertisement urging him to call the number in San Francisco.

The letter, according to Mr. Peterson's affidavit, "contained further discussion of the possibility of and desire for immunity in return for information concerning RUS's contact, who, according to RUS, has been involved for more than 20 years and plans to continue indefinitely." Law-enforcement officials have said the "contact" was John Walker.

But a letter from RUS dated Aug. 13, the day of the advertisement proposing the Mexico meeting, said he had decided "it would be best to give up on the idea of aiding in the termination of the espionage ring," the affidavit said. "No additional communications were forthcoming."